

COUNTY OF LOUDOUN

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 4, 2009

TO: Michael Elabarger, Project Manager, Planning Department

FROM: Theresa M. Stein, Planner, Zoning Administration

CASE NUMBER AND NAME: ZMOD 2008-0013, Safeway Signs at Sterling Plaza,
2nd submission

TAX MAP / PARCEL NUMBER (MCPI): /81/F10///22A (022-15-4155)

ZONING: PD-H3 administered as PD-CC-CC

Staff has reviewed the second submission material and the follow comments remain outstanding (original comment appears in italics):

1. ***"II.a.CRITICAL ISSUES:*** *The Safeway grocery store is one of several tenants on the subject parcel, which is owned by a single owner. The intent of a Comprehensive Sign Plan is a sign package for an entire development, not for a single tenant. Thus, a Comprehensive Sign Plan should include all the tenants in the Sterling Plaza Shopping Center and because this does not, it is not comprehensive."*
 - Comment remains outstanding. The owner of the shopping center has expressed an interest in a comprehensive sign plan, but has not joined this application, nor filed his own application. The proposed signs are for one of several tenants in a large in-line shopping center and the applicant's business is in the middle of a string of other business, creating disparity in the signage on one building. Another comprehensive sign plan could be filed by the owner for the remainder of the shopping center, proposing signs that are substantially different. Therefore, this application does not meet the intent of a comprehensive sign plan which is to provide a unified plan for a development that is cohesive.
2. ***"II.c. APPLICABLE ZONING ORDINANCE INFORMATION and CONFORMANCE:***
 - ii. *Please make the following changes to the Comprehensive Sign Matrix:*
 1. *In the "Proposed" column please identify each sign as a type which is listed in the Zoning Ordinance.*
 2. *Please add a column for "Permitted" and fill in according to what is permitted in the Zoning Ordinance.*
 3. *Please identify the modification to the Zoning Ordinance which would be required to allow for the proposed sign."*
 - Generally, the matrix needs to be revised in order to clarify what is allowed under the Ordinance, what the applicant is proposing, how it exceeds or modifies the Ordinance, and which category each sign illustration is representing. The Matrix typically mirrors the Ordinance, noting where changes are proposed. The following comments are related to providing a usable Matrix that is easy to administer and provide information so that the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors may clearly see what is

being requested and/or modified. See Section 5-1202(E)(3)(b), (c), and (d).

- The “Zoning Ordinance Section” column numbers the individual signs, but does not put in the Ordinance Section that applies for each sign. For example, sign #4 in the Matrix does not have a corresponding Ordinance section (it would be a tenant sign per 5-1204(D)(3)(d) and is not a sign separate from Sign #1). The Ordinance citation for Sign #5 requires correction. Further, each sign number in the Matrix should have a coordinated sign illustration that provides a specific location (see Section 5-1202(E)(3)(d). The existing illustrations can be modified to list which sign it represents in the Matrix.
- Revise the “Permitted” column to consistently quote the Ordinance. For Sign #1, the limit per façade is not included, but it is for Sign #2. This column should include all the Sign Ordinance Matrix requirements columns such as “Total Aggregate Sign Area, Max. Number of Signs, and Max Area of Any One Sign”.
- The “Sign Type As Per the Zoning Ordinance” is a duplicated column in the Matrix, but the information is not consistently provided. These are presumably the “Type Permitted” in the Ordinance, which appears to list signs that the applicant wishes to have, not its classification in the Ordinance. It lists sign types not found in the Ordinance, such as “Façade Wall Mount” use Ordinance terms such as “building mounted” (“wall mounted” is not listed in the requirements). For this zoning district, the Ordinance permits “entrance signs” and “tenant signs” that are “freestanding” or “building mounted”, per 5-1204(D)(3)(c) and (d), and thus this column needs to reflect the existing allowances using terms recognized in the Ordinance. If the second “Sign Type As Per Zoning Ordinance” column is meant to show what the type of sign applicant is proposing, it should be made clearer.
- The “Existing Sign” column in the Matrix lists signs that are currently on the property, but the “Blade Sign” does not currently exist and the Starbuck and SunTrust signs are not on the exterior of the building and there is no evidence they received permits. Remove these signs from the Matrix. The only signage that exists is one “Safeway” and “Food and Drug”, which must be counted as one sign per the Ordinance. If that sign is being replaced, be clear in the Matrix that it will remain, provide its total square footage (not eliminating spaces from the sign area calculation), and that another “Safeway” and logo (one) sign is being added. This Matrix will be used by the Zoning Permits section in the issuance of sign permits, so it should list what the applicant anticipates having on site.
- Clarify if the “Measurement and Area in sq ft” column is the size of the sign that is currently on the property (see above comment).
- In the “Measurement and Area in sq ft (Modification Requested)” column, Sign #1 is listed as 36.18 sf and it states that it meets code when in fact, it is actually part of Sign #4 and both are counted as one sign per Figure 4 in the Ordinance (see outstanding comments below). The square footage must be total of both signs and not listed as a separate signs. The space between the logo and words are not removed from the calculation of its area as noted in the prior zoning comments (see outstanding comments below). As such, this sign will not meet the Ordinance limitation of 60 sf maximum area of one sign. Revise the total area for Signs #6, 7, 5 as the space between the words or words and logo appear to be removed from the calculation. Revise the information for Sign #3 as it is listed as 12 sf and that it meets the

Ordinance requirement, however, the illustration shows that the sign is over 24 sf (the gap between the symbol and words are counted toward the total area and is not deducted). In addition, Sign #9 is listed as 15 sf and meeting “Code”, however, the illustration measures at 16.24 sf and does not meet the Ordinance requirements. Finally, it is noted that “(area & number)” are being modified, the column should be clear that the Ordinance permits 1 sign per façade, no more than 3 signs and the modification would request 7 signs per façade (or whatever number is), no more than a total of 9 tenant signs, so that there is a consistent comparison of what the Ordinance permits versus what is being proposed.

- iii. *When calculating the square feet of each sign, please make the following adjustments:*
1. *The Safeway sign and “S” logo at the entrance should be calculated as one (1) sign, not two separate signs. When measuring the sign, use the “Rule of Eight” noted in Figure 4 at the end of Section 5-1200. Do not subtract the space between the word Safeway and the “S” logo.*
 - Comment outstanding, continues to be incorrectly calculated; see above.
 2. *Recalculate the measurement of the SunTrust sign drawing a box around both the sunburst and the word SunTrust. Do not subtract the space between them.*
 - Comment outstanding, continues to be incorrectly calculated; see above.
 3. *Recalculate the measurement of the Starbucks sign drawing a box around both of the words. Do not subtract the space between the word Starbucks and Coffee.*
 - Comment outstanding, continues to be incorrectly calculated; see above.
 4. *Recalculate the measurement of the Safeway and “S” logo which will be replacing the Safeway Food and Drug sign. Do not subtract the space between the word Safeway and the “S” logo.*
 - Comment outstanding, continues to be incorrectly calculated; see above.
- A “Sterling Plaza, Safeway” sign illustration was included in the package, which appears to be an entrance sign, but is not included in the Matrix, nor is it clear if it will be in addition to, or replace, Sign #10 (listed as an existing Entrance sign). No total square footage is provided, nor is a proposed location provided. Clarify the purpose of this sign, state the section of the Ordinance that regulates it, provide its location, and the total number of entrance signs proposed and existing, and include it in the Matrix.
 - The Sign #10, Sterling Plaza Safeway, entrance sign illustration must state the total square footage, calculated per the Ordinance, and where it will be located in relation to the subject tenant.
 - The Statement of Justification must be revised to correctly calculate the sign square footage and reflect the total signage. For example, page 2 states that the proposed signs are a 36.18 sf Safeway sign and an “S” logo sign of 6.72 sf. It is one sign and must be calculated as stated in the original referral. Seven signs are listed, but 10 appear in the Matrix – correct the discrepancy. SunTrust is listed as 12 sf, but the illustration calculates over 24 sf. of sign area.
 - Correct the Matters of Consideration section of the Statement of Justification as the citation is incomplete or incorrect. Provide the source of the Criterion given. Further, Criterion 6 discusses a unified plan in terms of design and color; however, the applicant does not address that the proposed signs are for one tenant in an inline shopping center, so that the proposed signs will not be consistent or unified with its neighboring inline tenants, nor tenants of the entire shopping center. The proposal does not “reflect the unique character of the planned development” as it is only one of several tenants.